

INTRODUCTION OF KEYNOTE SPEAKER MERYL WILLIAMS

Denis Abbott

I have much pleasure in introducing Dr Meryl Williams, the Director General of the World Fish Center, as our keynote speaker at the conference.

Meryl has been Director General since 1994 when the Center was known as ICLARM, the International Center for Living Aquatic Resources and based in the Philippines. Last year the new World Fish Center headquarters was opened in Penang, Malaysia on a site donated by the Malaysian government.

It is one of the largest international agencies assisting poor people in developing countries. Through scientific research, it seeks to improve the production, management and conservation of living aquatic resources. Employing over 240 staff worldwide, it supports research facilities and offices in 9 countries and has ongoing projects in 22 countries. Underpinning this is an information service which has to cope with the barriers of the digital divide in supporting its staff and the people it seeks to help.

Prior to becoming Director General Meryl held senior policy and management positions as:

- Director of the Australian Institute of Marine Science in Townsville, Queensland.
- Associate Director of the Australian Bureau of Resource Sciences
- Executive Director of the Bureau of Rural Sciences, and
- Director of the Fisheries Resources Branch of the Bureau.

Before these management positions Meryl had worked as a scientist in the Australian Fisheries Service, a fisheries statistician for the Tuna & Billfish Assessment Program at the South Pacific Commission in New Caledonia and a Biometrician at the Queensland Department of Primary Industries.

I will now ask Meryl to give her paper “The digital divide: your role in bridging the gap in aquatic library services for the disconnected” co-authored with Chooh Poh Sze from the World Fish Center.